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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [KCFE](#) [NATO](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: HLTF MEETING MAY 16, 2007

REF: A. STATE 065839 (GUIDANCE)
[1](#)B. HLTF-N(2006)0031-REV2 DATED 16 JANUARY 2007
(MATRIX)
[1](#)C. HLTF-N(2006)0032-REV7 (POSITIVE AGENDA)

Classified By: Political Advisor Stuart Seldowitz,
reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. The May 16 HLTF meeting focused on CFE-related comments in Russian President Putin's April 26 statement and the positive steps the Alliance should take in response. The U.S. delegation was led by DOS/VC I DAS Karin [1](#)L. Look. Allies concluded that NATO should continue to send a positive message to Russia, including in the NRC(ACE) regarding NATO's own commitment to CFE and to ratification of Adapted CFE after all remaining Istanbul commitments have been fulfilled. Allies also agreed that it would not be useful to continue to press Moscow to explain what it meant by a "moratorium" on implementation of CFE. END SUMMARY.

RESPONSES TO PRESIDENT PUTIN'S STATEMENT

[1](#)2. (C) Allies agreed that President Putin's comments on CFE raised serious concerns for the future of the CFE regime, but most observed that it was not yet clear what practical impact the suggestion of a Russian "moratorium" would have on Russia's CFE implementation. Germany informed Allies it had raised Putin's speech with Russian DFM Alexander Grushko and asked him to clarify what Putin had said. Grushko responded that he viewed the speech as an invitation to intensified dialogue. Romania spoke with Russian embassy reps in Bucharest, who reiterated Putin's concerns about Missile Defense (MD), NATO enlargement and the CFE Treaty. The Spanish Rep to the HLTF related the Russian request, made in Vienna, for Russian FM Lavrov to address a joint session of the PC and FSC on the topics of Kosovo, OSCE reform, MD, Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs), and CFE.

[1](#)3. (C) Allies agreed that one clear message was Putin's desire to discuss concerns about CFE in the NRC framework. They also concluded that Russia does not appear to be planning an immediate withdrawal from the CFE Treaty; the idea appeared to be that Russia would implement its moratorium, or possibly take further steps, if its concerns were not addressed in a way that Moscow found acceptable. HLTF Chairman Martin Erdmann reported to the HLTF that CFE had figured prominently in a five-and-one-half hour lunch with Russian Ambassador Totskiy in which MD, airbase upgrades in Lithuania, U.S. forces' training in Romania and Bulgaria, and NATO enlargement were discussed at length. Despite the meeting length and discussion, Erdmann did not emerge with a clear understanding of Russia's intentions. Erdmann also

noted that while Russian CHOD Baluyevskiy's discussion with Allied Military Chiefs was not confrontational, Baluyevskiy's tone at a press conference that immediately followed the CHOD,s meeting was completely different and confrontational.

14. (C) Turkey (Gunn) remarked that it was quite concerned about Putin's speech because of the importance Turkey places on the CFE Treaty. Gunn proposed (and nearly every member of the Alliance who spoke afterwards agreed to the merit of his proposals), that the Alliance should not press for more clarity from Russia on its "moratorium" but the Allies should monitor Russia's responses and how they react. He urged NATO to adopt an active public diplomacy program that includes the following four elements: (a) stress the utmost importance of CFE and early entry into force of A/CFE; (b) emphasize the benefits of the CFE Treaty for Russia and for Allies; (c) emphasize that there is not any threat towards Russia from NATO; and (d) dialogue should continue through existing channels.

15. (C) Other strong remarks from the Allies included:

(a) Germany (Biontino) declared that there was not a need for clarification because Russia has made numerous statements in the past year regarding its concerns on missile defense, cross-group stationing, the CFE Treaty, and its views on the European Union. He concluded that relations with Russia are in a wider but more difficult context. Germany was looking for a compromise that defined the "way ahead" for Allies to move forward with ratification.

(b) The Czech Republic called for the Allies to stay positive. Russia continues to implement the CFE Treaty and the Alliance must send a clear message of solidarity. He reiterated that host nation consent was the core value, A/CFE was important, and that Czech Republic would be prepared to ratify the adapted Treaty as soon as conditions were met.

(c) U.S. rep Look agreed that we should not press Russia for clarity on the moratorium but that we should have common themes in our Public Diplomacy campaign, which included that there was no room in CFE for partial implementation. DAS Look added that we need to respond seriously but we should not jump to compromise (as had been suggested by Germany).

(d) France (Grand) noted that Putin's statement had no concrete implications for the CFE Treaty. He suggested that the Putin Statement was delivered to the Russian Parliament for internal use. He agreed to most of the points already made and to the importance of keeping Russia engaged in dialogue to discuss their concerns. He also reiterated that discussions did not equal compromise or re-negotiations.

(e) UK (Totty) questioned if anyone in the Alliance knew what Russia was up to. He asked what the Alliance's response should be, seeking a clear answer on how we should continue our dialogue with Russia.

(f) Lithuania addressed the accession issue recalling that it and the other Baltic states had stated that they would join the Treaty and their position has not changed. Lithuania also noted its skepticism of Russian claims, and would like to see the CFE Treaty maintained as a "strong" Treaty with host nation consent being highlighted as fundamentally important.

(e) Italy, in an overarching statement, opined that over the years arms control has grown confrontational; therefore, a strategic review with a goal of stabilizing partnerships with Russia may be needed.

16. (C) Additionally, since the "work program and strategic orientation" was pulled from the agenda, U.S. Rep Look used this opportunity to propose that the HLTF sponsor a seminar in fall or winter 2007 to discuss the implementation of the Adapted CFE Treaty. Look indicated that the value of such a seminar would be both to highlight our determination to get the A/CFE Treaty into force, and also to get us prepared, in practical ways, for its implementation. Germany spoke immediately urging agreement on the "Matrix" as a clean NATO

position and also indicated support for the seminar. UK, Turkey and France endorsed the seminar as relevant and important. The Chairman (Erdmann), also supportive, noted that venue and details would be quite important. Look urged that the IS develop a concept for the seminar in the coming months.

FULFILLMENT OF ISTANBUL COMMITMENTS

¶17. (C) Discussion of Istanbul commitments always includes a lengthy discussion of the German-originated "Matrix," a working NATO document which attempts to outline the status of all Istanbul commitments. Erdmann remarked that it would be useful if the Matrix could spell-out for Russia what the Istanbul commitments required. In that case, it would need to make clear whether the Russian Peace Keeping Forces (PKF) in Moldova was covered by the Istanbul commitments or not. The Netherlands encouraged agreement on the Matrix. The U.S. (Look) said that, based on previous discussions, it appeared impossible that Allies could agree on this basic point in this context. Thus, the "Matrix" was not the answer. However, Allies could agree that a new peacekeeping force should replace the current Russian led force. While many Allies agreed with this U.S. observation, many also expressed concerns) and confusion) regarding the current Moldovan position on the issue, having heard rumors of a possible agreement between Moldova and Russia on an overall political settlement, which would include a continued Russian presence. U.S. Rep Look suggested that Moldova and Georgia be asked to brief the HLTF (in a 26 1 format), since they had not done so for over a year.

PREPARATION FOR THE NRC(ACE)

¶18. (C) In preparations for the NRC(ACE) meeting later that afternoon (Note: coverage of the NRC(ACE) meeting is reported septel), ASYG Erdmann proceeded through the proposed ACE agenda. U.S. Rep Look opined that we, as the Alliance, should not press Russia to expand on Putin's speech and should keep discussion on the CFE Treaty positive, that host nation consent was a core issue, and that Russia needs to continue to implement the Treaty. Germany agreed that we

should use the ACE as an opportunity to discuss positive ideas on the way ahead.

¶19. (C) Other topics for discussion in preparation for the ACE included:

(a) need to emphasize that all Allies continue to agree that fulfillment of Istanbul commitments is necessary before Allies will move forward with ratification procedures for the Adapted CFE Treaty;

(b) NATO airbase in Lithuania) NATO Secretary General will explain the purpose of the airbase in a letter to Russia, and why the airbase should not be viewed as threatening;

(c) CSBM Seminar in Vienna, scheduled for October) France and Germany are co-sponsoring that with Russia;

(d) Spain announced that Russia will address CFE in the Annual Security Review Conference to be held in Vienna on 19-20 June; and

(e) that the Alliance does not need to schedule an NRC(ACE) meeting after every HLTF.

NEXT HLTF MEETING

¶10. (SBU) With all the activities scheduled in Vienna and

with NATO-Russia Council Tenth Anniversary meetings, four dates were identified for possible HLTF meeting dates (May 31, June 21, July 12, and July 19). The U.S. proposed the next meeting be on June 21, prior to the NRC anniversary meeting in Russia (June 25-26). Other Allies agreed. If workable, that will be the date of the next HLTF, pending a final announcement by the International Staff.

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